

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-10 SCI-06

OMB-01 AID-20 IGA-02 SS-20 SPC-03 L-03 H-03 PRS-01

SAM-01 AGR-20 DODE-00 HEW-08 PM-07 DRC-01 /173 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 458

INFO AJEBASSY JAKARTA 4140

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

ACONSUL CHIANG MAI 2277

USMISION GENEVA

CINCPAC

DEA HQS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 2194

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: REPORT ON TRI-COUNTRY NARCOTICS MEETING, SINGAPORE

JANUARY 31, 1974

SUMMARY

1. AT THE TRI-COUNTRY NARCOTICS MEETING IN SINGAPORE,
JANUARY 31, IT WAS AGREED BY DELEGATES FROM BURMA, LAOS, AND
THAILAND AND THE OBSERVER FROM HONG KONG THAT SOME OVER-ALL
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IMPROVEMENT IN BOTH INTERDICTION CAPABILITY AND

CROP SUBSTITUTION EFFORTS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE GOLD TRIANGLE SINCE THE PREVIOUS TRI-COUNTRY MEETING IN BANGKOK SEPTEMBER 18-20, 1973. SPECIFIC PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN (A) INCREASING LOCAL AWARENESS OF THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM,(THANKS IN PART TO PERSISTENT U.S. WORK; (B) LOCAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY AND OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUES;(C) CREATION OF NEW SUPPRESSION UNIT IN THAILAND (THE METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT); (D) CONTINUED BURMESE ARMY ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS; (E) CROP SUBSTITUTION AND EXTENSION; AND (F) THAI WILLINGNESS TO ACT AGAINST THE TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES OF BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS OPERATING FROM THAI SIDE.

2. IT WAS AGREED, GIVEN THE CROSS-BORDER NATURE OF THE TRAFFIC, THAT PRIORITY MUST CONTINUE TO BE GIVEN THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF TRI-NATION COOPERATION. RTG ARREST OF JIMMY YANG, BURMESE DISSIDENT LEADER, ON JANUARY 7 WAS SEEN AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN PROMOTING GUB-RTG COOPERATION. PROSPECTS FOR CENTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION ON CROP SUBSTITUTION AND EXTENSION AT THE UNPDAC/CHANG KHEN STATION IN THAILAND WERE NOTED. IT WAS AGREED ALSO THAT AN EXCHANGE OF JOURNALISTS SHOULD BE PROMOTED.

3. CONFEREES NOTED THAT A STAGE HAS BEEN REACHED IN WHICH TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS, CONFRONTED BY THE ENHANCED INTERDICTION EFFORTS OF 1973, APPEAR NOW TO BE ENGAGED IN A SEARCH FOR NEW ROUTES AND NEW TECHNIQUES. THESE CHANGES STRESS THE CONTINUED NEED FOR RAPID IMPROVEMENT IN INTELLIGENCE WORK DIRECTED AT (A) TRANSPORTATION PRACTICES IN NORTH THAILAND; (B) FINANCING MECHANISMS AMONG THE CHINESE (TEOCHIU) COMMUNITY IN BANGKOK; (C) TECHNIQUES OF TRANSPORT THROUGH CENTRAL THAILAND; AND (D) THE COLLECTION OF OPIUM IN SOUTH THAILAND AND ITS TRANSPORT BY TRAWLER TO HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE OR BY OTHER MEANS TO MALAYSIA.

4. FINALLY, APPRECIATION WAS EXPRESSED FOR THE RAPID RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO LOCAL NEEDS. THE SUGGESTION WAS MADE THAT THE NEXT TRI-COUNTRY MEETING BE HELD IN HONG KONG IN MAY, PENDING AMCONSUL HONG KONG'S APPROVAL.

5. AMEMBASSIES RANGON AND VIENTIANE AND CONGEN HONG KONG
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CONCUR IN THIS REPORT. END SUMMARY

6. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EA REGIONAL NARCOTICS CONFERENCE IN SINGAPORE JANUARY 28-30, A TRI-COUNTRY MEETING WAS HELD JANUARY 31. THIS WAS ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM EMBASSIES RANGOON, VIENTIANE, BANGKOK, AMCONGEN HONG KONG, CINCPAC, AND THE DEPARTMENT. BELOW IS ELABORATION OF POINTS MADE IN THE SUMMARY.

THAILAND

7. AS A TRAFFICKERS' RESPONSE TO INTERDICTION EFFORTS OF 1973, A TREND HAS BEEN NOTED TOWARD A MORE DIFFUSED PATTERN IN TRANSPORT. CARAVANS RARELY CROSS THE THAI BORDER FROM BURMA. BUYERS ARE NOW MORE AND MORE FORCED TO GO INTO BURMA TO CONCLUDE DEALS. MANPACKING HAS BECOME MORE PREVALENT. THERE ARE TWO RESULTS: (A) NEW APPROACHES ON THE ENFORCEMENT SIDE WILL BE NECESSARY; AND (B) IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WITH FEWER LARGE-SCALE SEIZURES FOLLOWING FRAGMENTATION OF THE TRAFFICKING PATTERN, SEIZURE FIGURES MAY DROP SOMEWHAT IN 1974. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ADDED PRESSURES OF 1973 MAY CONTRIBUTE TO LOWER PRODUCTION AND TO LESS AMOUNTS TRANSITTING THAILAND. A SUDDEN AND DRASTIC DROP IN THAI TRAWLER SAILINGS FOR HONG KONG WAS NOTED AND ATTRIBUTED IN PART TO TRAFFICKERS' FEAR OF THE ENHANCED RTG INTERDICTION EFFORT. IN ALL THIS, THE LARGE ELEMENT OF SPECULATION WAS NOTED AND THE CONTINUED NEED FOR BETTER INTELLIGENCE STRESSED.

8. TWO PROAGS, ONE FOR SUPPRESSION CENTERING ON THE FIVE HELICOPTERS AND SUPPORTING MATERIAL BEING GIVEN THE RTG, AND ONE FOR CROP SUBSTITUTION, ARE NOW BEING DISCUSSED WITH THE RTG.

9. IT WAS AGREED THAT RTG ARREST OF JIMMY YANG, KOKANG RESISTANCE FORCE LEADER, WAS WELL-RECEIVED BY THE BURMESE AND, IF SUPPLEMENTED BY CONTINUED PRESSURES AGAINST THE BURMESE DISSIDENTS, COULD ENCOURAGE THE GUB TO ENTER INTO CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH THE THAI ON NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION. EMBASSY BANGKOK WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE TO THE RTG THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL SANCTIONS AGAINST YANG, PERHAPS TO
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INCLUDE EXTRADITION TO RANGOON. SOME LEADERS OF THE POST-OCTOBER 14 RTG ADMINISTRATION HAVE EXPRESSED AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM POSED BY EXISTENCE ON THAI SOIL OF BURMESE
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AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AHEMBASSY TAIPEI 2395

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 2194

13. BURMESE OFFICIALS AVE ALLEGED THAT A MUNITIONS
FACTORY IN THAILAND SUPPLIES UNMARKED ARMS TO BURMESE
DISSIDENTS. EMBASSY BANGKOK WILL LOOK INTO THIS ALLEGATION.

14. REPORTED PRC PRE-EMPTIVE BUYING OF 25 TONS OF OPIUM
(PROBABLY FOR LEGITIMATE PRODUCTION OF MEDICINES) MAY BE
ANOTHER FACTOR IN FORCING SHIFTS IN TRAFFICKING PATTERNS
IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE. TRAFFICKERS MAY NOW HAVE TO MOVE
WEST OF THE SALWEEN WHERE THE BURMESE ARMY CAN GET AT THEM
MORE EASILY, PROVIDING THEY CAN SPARE THE RESOURCES.
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LAOS

15. THE ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF OPIUM IN LAOS
REMAINS AT ABOUT 25 TONS, INSUFFICIENT FOR LAOS CONSUMPTION
NEEDS. THUS, LAOS IS A NET IMPORTER AND NOT SIGNIFICANT IN THE
INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC. CONTINUED ATTENTION MUST BE GIVEN THE
LAOS SITUATION, HOWEVER, BECAUSE (A) LAOS REMAINS A LOGICAL
TRANSHIPMENT AREA FOR OPIUM MOVING FROM BURMA TO THAILAND AND
(B) LAOS REMAINS A POTENTIAL WORLD SUPPLIER WHICH MUST BE
WATCHED.

16. THE MISSION SUGGESTS THAT CROP SUBSTITUTION AND ADDICT

TREATMENT/ REHABILITATION EFFORTS IN LAOS SHOULD RECEIVE INCREASED PRIORITY.

17 THE FUTURE OF THE RLG NARCOTICS PROGRAM WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED BY THE ATTITUDE OF THE PATHET LAO MEMBERS OF THE SOON TO BE FORMED PGNU. IF THE PL EQUATES U.S. ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL WITH INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, THE U.S. MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE FORCED TO CURTAIL ITS NARCOTICS EFFORT IN LAOS. SOME HOPE LIES IN THE FACT THAT THE GROUPE SPECIAL D'INVESTIGATION, THE LAO NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AND INVESTIGAION AGENCY, IS IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND THUS --UNLIKE RLG MINISTRIES -- WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO JOINT RLG-PL DIRECTION.

18. A RELATED FUTURE UNCERTAINTY CENTERS ON THE RESULTS OF THE PENDING MERGER OF RLG-PL ARMED FORCES. THE REQUIRED REDUCTIONS IN FAR STRENGTH WILL RELEASE MANY TRIBALS WHO -- PERHAPS UNABLE TO FIND WORK -- MIGHT BE TEMPTED INTO OPIUM PRODUCTION. ETHNIC LAO RELEASED FROM FAR MIGHT LIKEWISE BECOME INVOLVED IN TRAFFICKING.

19. THE VIENTIANE MISSION INTENDS TO REDUCE NARCOTICS PERSONNEL FROM ABOUT 30 TO FROM 15 TO 20 AS A MEANS OF ANTICIPATING THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES TO FOLLOW ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PGNU.

20. HIGH VALUE IS PLACED ON CONTINUED LAO (GSI) CONTACTS WITH THAI SUPPRESSION AUTHORITIES (SNO). THE LAO ALSO WISH TO CONTINUE CONTACT WITH THE UNPDAC CROP SUBSTITUTION AND EXTENSION STATION NEAR CHIANG MAI. THIS PROVIDES AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR BILATERAL LAO-THAI COOPERATION WHICH IS BEST SUITED TO THE NEW
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REQUIREMENTS
OF THE PGNU.

HONG KONG

21. THE VALUE OF THE ASSIGNMENT OF PETER LAW, NEWLY ASSIGNED TO THE UK EMBASSY IN BANGKOK AS NARCOTICS LIAISON OFFICER, WAS UNDERLINED.

22. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE SIGNIFICANT RISE IN PRICE OF OPIUM IN HONG KONG WAS PROBABLY THE RESULT OF DROP IN SUPPLY FROM THAILAND. ALTHOUGH THE ABRUPT SLOWDOWN IN THAI TRAWLER SAILINGS FOR HONG KONG IN THE LAST MONTHS IS PROBABLY THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THIS SHORT SUPPLY, IT WAS AGREED (A) THAT OPIUM FROM THAILAND CONTINUES TO ENTER HONG KONG AND THEREFORE (B) THAT PRIORITY MUST CONTINUE TO BE GIVEN TO TRAWLER TRAFFIC. HONG KONG BELIEVES THAT TRAWLERS CARRING OPIUM GENERALLY DO NOT ENTER PRC WATERS, BUT ARE MET AT SEA BY HONG KONG-BASED TRAWLERS. BY THIS MEANS THE THAI TRAWLERS SEEK TO CIRCUMVENT HONG KONG AERIAL SURVEILLANCE.

23. GENERALIN INFORMAL DISCUSSION AMONG GOLDEN TRIANGLE

COUNTRIES, IT WAS AGREED THAT TO EXPAND THE LIST OF COUNTRIES WHERE LEGAL PRODUCTION OF OPIUM WOULD BE AUTHORIZED (A SUBJECT TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE CND SPCIAL SESSION IN GENEVA FEBRUARY 18-MARCH 1, 1974) WOULD PROBABLY HAVE THE EFFECT OF SERIOUSLY UNDERMINING U.S. EFFORTS WITH GOLDEN TRIANGLE COUNTRIES DIRECTED AT CESSATION OF THE TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND THE END OF ITS PRODUCTION. CONFEREES AGREED THAT PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN INSTEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYNTHETIC SUBSTITUTES FOR OPIUM IN ITS MEDICINAL USES.
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